



\$358,485 Port Grant Awarded to Jackson County Sheriff's Department

Funds will be used for disaster preparedness

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (August 5, 2011) – The Jackson County Sheriff's Department has been awarded a \$358,485 port security grant for the implementation of a Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CIKR) protection plan. The grant is presented by the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

"Having a CIKR protection plan in place ensures first responders have the knowledge and training to protect critical resources," said J.W. Ledbetter, Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security. "These funds will improve our readiness and assist in reducing weaknesses, therefore minimizing the consequences of attacks or other incidents."

A protection plan for Pascagoula would include vulnerability assessments in addition to implementing protective measures and contingency plans that will improve security protocols for both the Port of Pascagoula and the petrochemical industry. The plan also seeks to enhance preparedness and recovery through extensive first-responder training and exercise programs.

The grants are part of a \$200 million federal program being administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security. The program is intended to improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities at the state, local and community levels as part of a comprehensive national emergency management system.

Added Ledbetter, "The upcoming anniversaries of September 11th and Hurricane Katrina should remind us of all the potential situations that exist and that we need to take efforts to ensure that we are prepared in the future."

The grant program is part of a federal plan for 'All-Hazard' response planning, beginning at local levels. The aim is to improve response capabilities for catastrophic natural disasters, potential for weapons of mass destruction, acts of terrorism, and chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear/explosive incidents. The initiative also improves local response capabilities for traffic accidents, fires and other emergencies.

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, a division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, in fiscal year 2011 will distribute more than \$5.29 million in Homeland Security Grant Program funding in Mississippi for training and equipment.

For more information go to www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov